



Turtle Women Rising and Kiya's Heartbeat

Kiya is a Coast Salish, a Pacific Northwest Tribe, word which means Grandmother. Every culture, every nation, every nationality has a drum which is the Heartbeat...Indigenous people globally share this commonality.

In July of 2006 at [Born to Drum](#), a woman's drum camp in California, a woman drummer named Barbara Borden, brought her incredible drum to share, which she identified as her "Heart Drum". The drum is 5 1/2' across and 2 1/2' high, made from one Cottonwood Tree, and covered on both sides with cowhide. It took Barbara and her community six years of fundraising to get the materials together for this drum and two years for a Native woman to put it together. Barbara then traveled around the San Francisco Bay area for six more years with the drum.

The Heart Drum sat covered with a beautiful blanket waiting to be introduced to the one hundred and fifty women in attendance at Born to Drum. When she was brought out later that evening, she was a force to behold as all were touched, moved, and inspired by her healing presence and powerful sound, not knowing that was the beginning of the drum's journey north. The drum was played throughout the camp. It was unexpectedly gifted from Barbara Borden to Suzy Hawk and Deborah Guerrero on the 3rd day in a ceremony. Ms. Borden said that she knew this drum needed to go with them. She explained that she had several commitments to fulfill before the drum could travel up to Seattle with us for good. In December of 2006, Barbara Borden drove the drum to the Suquamish Reservation across the water from Seattle where a feast and ceremony took place to name, feed, water, sing, and play ceremonial songs on/for this beautiful gift. It was at that time that her name Kiya's Heartbeat came to be.

Eli Painted Crow and Deborah Guerrero met at Carolyn Brandy and Jackie Thomason's Born to Drum camp the following year in July of 2007. Eli shared life changing stories of her 22 1/2 year Army service career. She shared her vision of taking a Million Drums to Washington D.C. in a Stand for PEACE. Through many hours of conversations on the phone after camp, the decision to work together to organize a gathering in D.C. came to be. The name [Turtle Women Rising](#) (TWR) came about through these conversations, and a "New Way to Walk on the Earth" (TWR theme song) came about with a third sister named Imani White, who joined us at our first gathering October 10-13, 2008 in D.C.

The [International Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmother's](#) and the [Center for Sacred Studies](#) were invited and came to pray at the D.C. gathering, as they blessed all who gathered to Stand for PEACE. World Healer [Alfredo Sfeir Younis](#) and his assistant Myra Jackson heard about this work and donated \$5000. He asked permission to have a sacred Mayan fire on site, then asked that youth be brought to the gathering.

A Navajo sister Mary Jones (20 year Army Veteran) and her two daughters were there to represent and hold sacred space. Many local people from the area as well as Veterans for Peace helped through donations, work, and sheer love to make this gathering a total success. Women drummers from all over joined in as the heartbeat of the drums were heard for 24 hours a day for 4 days. A woman who was walking around the world for Peace emailed us and said that she was with us in spirit. People in Olympia, Washington drummed in solidarity on the four days and brought in local elders to share their wisdom under the guidance of Deeno Atkins, Pat Rasmussen, and Paulette and Brian Frisina.

Gregoria Molina graciously accepted and has fulfilled the role of Respected Ceremonial Elder as she guides all involved with the drum ceremony through love, and dignity on this sacred path. Kiya's Heartbeat continues her journey with Eli and Deborah, who share their love, faith, hope, and charity in peace with all people.

Only Creator and Kiya's Heartbeat know where she will eventually be years to come when the Million Drums are in D.C. and around the world to fulfill the vision/passion of two Indigenous and determined women plus all those who have contributed to this life journey.



Kiya's Heartbeat at the 2008 Prayer Vigil for the Earth